II. CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An image transfer apparatus for transferring an image on a sheet medium, the apparatus comprising:

a frame;

a reader connected to the frame for reading the image on the sheet medium, the image moving relative to the reader in a process direction when the reader reads the image; and

a positioning system connected to the frame for controllably skewing the sheet medium so that the sheet medium is in a skewed [[at]] position having a predetermined skew angle relative to the process direction;

wherein, a leading edge of the sheet medium is not perpendicular to the process direction when the sheet medium is at the predetermined skew angle.

2. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the sheet medium is positioned at the predetermined skew angle when the reader reads the image on the sheet medium.

3. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a processor connected to the reader for receiving from the reader electronic data embodying the image read by the reader.

4. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the processor has programming for detecting the skew angle.

5. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the skew angle is established for providing a data portion, of the electronic data, defining a dirt generated feature with a predetermined characteristic indicating that the data portion defines the dirt generated feature.

6. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the processor has programming capable of recognizing the predetermined characteristic of the data portion.

7. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the predetermined characteristic is that the data portion defines a substantially linear feature oriented in a direction relative to the image read by the reader corresponding to the process direction.

8. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the skew angle is larger than a predetermined threshold.

9. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the skew angle is between about 10 to 50 mrads.

10. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a processor connected to the reader, the processor being programmed for processing electronic data embodying the image read by the reader so that a final output image is not skewed.

11. (currently amended) An image transfer apparatus dirt detection system for detecting dirt affecting image transfer quality, the system comprising:

a reader capable of reading the image disposed on a medium, the reader having a predetermined process direction for reading the image;

a processor connected to the reader for receiving electronic data embodying the image read by the reader; and

a skew system connected to the reader for controllably skewing the image so that the image is in a skewed [[at]] position having a predetermined angle relative to the process direction from an initial orientation to a skewed orientation, the reader reading the image when the image is in the skewed orientation;

wherein, a leading edge of the medium is not perpendicular to the process direction when the sheet medium is at the predetermined angle.

12. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the processor has programming for detecting dirt generated data in the electronic data from the reader.

13. (original) The system according to Claim 11, wherein the initial orientation of the image has a predetermined relationship to the process direction of the reader.

14. (original) The system according to Claim 11, wherein the processor has programming for determining the skewed orientation of the image from the electronic data.

15. (original) The system according to Claim 11, wherein the processor has programming for processing the electronic data so that a final output image is not skewed.

16. (original) The system according to Claim 11, wherein the processor has programming for detecting features defined by the electronic data having a predetermined relation relative to the process direction.

17. (original) The system according to Claim 16, wherein the features have a substantially linear shape.

18. (original) The system according to Claim 16, wherein the features define at least one line, said line being aligned substantially parallel to an axis of the image corresponding to the process direction.

19. (original) The system according to Claim 11, wherein the predetermined angle provide a data portion, of the electronic data, generated by dirt during reading with a predetermined characteristic indicating the data portion is caused by dirt.

20. (currently amended) An image transfer apparatus dirt detection system for detecting dirt affecting image transfer quality, the system comprising:

a reader capable of reading the image disposed on a medium, the reader having a predetermined process direction for reading the image;

a processor connected to the reader for receiving electronic data embodying the image read by the reader; and

a positioning system connected to the reader for controllably skewing the image so that the image is in a skewed [[at]] position having a predetermined slant relative

to the process direction so that a dirt generated feature included in the electronic data is identifiable by programming of the processor;

wherein, a leading edge of the medium is not perpendicular to the process direction when the sheet medium is at the predetermined slant.

21. (original) The system according to Claim 20, wherein the slant defines an angle between a vertical axis of the image and the process direction of about 10 to 50 mrads.

22. (original) The system according to Claim 20, wherein the dirt generated feature is caused by dirt during reading of the image by the reader.

23. (original) The system according to Claim 20, wherein the dirt generated feature is provided with a predetermined characteristic by the slant causing the dirt generated feature to be identifiable.

24. (original) The system according to Claim 23, wherein the predetermined characteristic is that a linear portion of the feature is oriented substantially parallel to the process direction.

25. (currently amended) An image transfer apparatus for transferring an image on a sheet medium, the apparatus comprising:

a frame;

a reader connected to the frame for reading the image on the sheet medium;

a positioning system connected to the frame for controllably skewing the sheet medium so that the sheet medium is in a skewed [[at]] position having a predetermined skew angle; and

a detector connected to the frame for detecting data, from the electronic data generated by the reader reading the image, that defines a feature in a final output image caused by dirt during reading of the image by the reader;

wherein, a leading edge of the sheet medium is not perpendicular to a process direction of the reader when the sheet medium at the predetermined skew angle.

26. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein the detector comprises a processor connected to the reader to receive the electronic data from the reader.

27. (original) The apparatus according to Claim 26, wherein the image moves relative to the reader in the process direction when the reader reads the image.